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ABSTRACT

Empire State College's alternative approaches to higher education are described in this report. The college is a nontraditional institution emphasizing the following innovative elements: (1) individualized education, carried out through learning contracts; (2) an open format for easy access, placing minimal constraints on time, place, residence and manner of learning; (3) a degree program developed by students in consultation with faculty; (4) a portfolio assessment process certifying prior college-level learning; (5) a flexible curriculum with a multidisciplinary focus; (6) continuing development of learning resources; and (7) a highly decentralized college organization relying on a unique mentor-student model. More than 180 studies of the college show that it is effective. The college currently has 333 faculty serving 6,400 students at 45 locations. A college brochure and master plan for 1988-1992 are appended. (KM)

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ED306872

TITLE OF PROGRAM: INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION AT EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE

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AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory is a two-year project seeking to establish and test a model system for collecting and disseminating information on model programs at AASCU-member institutions--375 of the public four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

The four objectives of the project are:

- To increase the information on model programs available to all institutions through the ERIC system
- To encourage the use of the ERIC system by AASCU institutions
- To improve AASCU's ability to know about, and share information on, activities at member institutions, and
- To test a model for collaboration with ERIC that other national organizations might adopt.

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project is funded with a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, in collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at The George Washington University.

(2) ABSTRACT

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION AT EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE

Empire State College was created in 1971 to develop alternative approaches to higher education that would build on and extend the existing strengths and resources of the State University of New York system. Empire State's central mission is to: create alternative structures to increase access for those unable or unwilling to study on campus; develop academic programs responsive to individual purposes and emerging social needs; devise educational teaching and learning methods that serve students with widely varied needs; and ensure programs of high quality at reasonable cost.

In developing the structure, processes, and curricular strategy to fulfill this basic mission, the College holds as fundamental three educational principles: that effective learning derives from the purposes and needs that are important to the individual; that learning occurs in varied ways and places; and that styles of learning and of teaching may differ significantly from person to person and from one setting to another. From these principles, the College has refined its mission and developed a distinctive institutional character, emerging from a combination of innovative elements: individualized education, carried out through a contract mode of learning; an open format for access, placing minimal constraints on the time, place, residence, and manner of learning; a degree program developed by the students in consultation with faculty, joining the course of study to that student's educational goals; a portfolio assessment process certifying prior college-level learning; a flexible curriculum, incorporating broad areas of multidisciplinary study and modes of inquiry; continuing development of learning resources using new pedagogies and technologies; and a highly dispersed and decentralized college organization relying for its delivery on a unique mentor-student model.

From the beginning, the College has committed staff and resources to developing internal review and evaluation processes. Numerous outside evaluators, accrediting teams, auditors, and State Education Department reviewers who were interested in seeing how well Empire's program was working have visited the college. As a result, more than 180 studies of the College, its program, its students, its faculty, its delivery system, and its costs have been completed. The results show that the program serves adult learners well and is cost-effective. As an internationally renowned model of innovation and experimentation, Empire State College has shared its ideas, program strategies, and operating practices with other interested American colleges and a host of educators and policy makers from many foreign countries. Currently, the College has 124 full-time faculty plus 209 part-time faculty serving over 6,400 students in a statewide operation at 45 different locations. More than 15,000 students have earned degrees at the College.

(3) INTRODUCTION

This document includes a brief background statement regarding the founding of Empire State College and an extensive description of the program. The description covers a statement about the distinctive mission of Empire State College, the philosophy of the institution, the key assumptions underlying the academic program, and the innovative elements that, when

combined, produce a unique and most effective force for educating adults. Each of the elements of the academic program--individualized degree plan, assessment of prior learning and contract learning--are discussed as well as the faculty (mentor)-student relationship that is at the heart of the individualized approach. The administrative structure of this statewide institution without a campus is described as well as the diversity of students served. The results of this innovative effort to reach adult learners is discussed as well as the larger impact of this form of higher education in a national and international context. Included as appendices to the report are the College's 1988 Master Plan, a brochure describing research publications available from the College, and a special education issue of the College's journal, Golden Hill, which presents the reflections and commentary of Empire State College faculty on current issues of theory and practice in American higher education.

(4) BACKGROUND

Empire State College was founded to make higher education accessible and to offer educational programs responsive to individual student needs. The majority of Empire State students have compelling academic, professional, or personal circumstances that make the College uniquely suitable to them. Many students have job or family responsibilities that conflict with the usual fixed schedule of regular classes; others have substantial college-level learning acquired through work or life experience for which they seek academic recognition; still others wish to design degree programs that cut across traditional disciplinary lines. Empire State College offers alternative approaches to structure, academic program, and educational methodology for these and a wide range of other students.

(5) DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

Empire State College was created in 1971 to develop alternative approaches to higher education that would build on and extend the existing strengths and resources of the State University system. Empire State's central mission is to provide and test effective learning alternatives for postsecondary students. This mission requires: creating alternative structures to increase access for those unable or unwilling to study on campus; developing academic programs responsive to individual purposes and emerging social needs; devising educational teaching and learning methods that serve students with widely varied needs; and ensuring programs of high quality at reasonable cost.

In developing the structure, processes, and curricular strategy to fulfill this basic mission, the College holds as fundamental three educational principles: that effective learning derives from the purposes and needs that are important to the individual; that learning occurs in varied ways and places; and that styles of learning and of teaching may differ significantly from person to person and from one setting to another. From these principles, the College has refined its mission and developed a distinctive institutional character, emerging from a combination of innovative elements:

--individualized education, carried out through a contract mode of learning;

--an open format for access, placing minimal constraints on the time, place, residence, and manner of learning;

--a degree program developed by the students in consultation with faculty, joining the course of study to that student's educational goals;

--a portfolio assessment process certifying prior college-level learning;

--a flexible curriculum, incorporating broad areas of multidisciplinary study and modes of inquiry;

--continuing development of learning resources using new pedagogies and technologies; and

--a highly dispersed and decentralized college organization, relying for its delivery on a unique mentor-student model.

The academic program enables students to undertake studies that are consistent with their specific backgrounds, learning styles, and educational needs. Each student's academic program has three essential components. The first is the individual degree program, which serves as a description of the student's educational goals and an outline of the means to be employed in achieving these goals. The degree program allows considerable latitude in responding to the student's goals and learning needs. The completed document incorporates the student's previous formal studies, college-level learning from nonformal educational activities where these are appropriate to the student's overall goals, and new learning that the student intends to pursue under contract with the College. Thus, the degree program represents a comprehensive statement of the content for which the College will grant either an associate, baccalaureate, or master's degree.

The second component, the assessment of prior learning, is the documentation and evaluation process for the college-level learning students bring to Empire State and for which the College grants academic credit. The College requires, and through the process ensures, that the learning rather than the experience is documented, that the learning is college-level, that it is evaluated for credit by an approved method (e.g., recognized experts or examinations), and that the learning is appropriate to the degree program the student has undertaken.

The third component is the learning contract, the mechanism through which specific segments of the degree program are organized. Student and faculty (called mentors) design the learning contract to meet the learning needs identified in the student's degree program; they plan the content and method of study, the criteria for evaluation, the length of the contract, and the credit to be awarded on its successful completion. Learning contracts are highly flexible, enabling students to undertake unique interdisciplinary studies and to use a variety of approaches to and resources for study.

Because an objective of the College is to provide study opportunities in response to student purposes, interests, and needs, the College does not have a single prescribed curriculum but has instead eleven broad areas of study. Within each area, students and their mentors will design a substantive

instructional plan that may be entirely unique to those persons. The areas of study offered are: The Arts; Business, Management, and Economics; Community and Human Services; Cultural Studies; Educational Studies; Historical Studies; Human Development; Labor Studies (offered only at the Harry Van Arsdale Jr. School of Labor Studies in New York City); Science, Mathematics, and Technology; Social Theory, Social Structure, and Change; and Interdisciplinary Studies.

At the heart of the College's individualized approaches to education is the one-to-one relationship between the student and the faculty member. On enrolling in the College, each student is assigned a mentor who helps the student plan and coordinate a course of study. The College calls its faculty members mentors because their role is broader than that of teachers in most other colleges. Besides providing instruction in their own fields of specialization, mentors advise students about the academic alternatives open to them, assist students in designing their academic programs, identify the instructional resources to support study at the College, and evaluate the overall quality of the students' work.

The College has 124 full-time faculty plus 209 part-time faculty available to serve 6,400 students in 1989. Mentors come from a variety of backgrounds, including traditional colleges, industry, state government, and trade unions. Over 70 percent hold terminal degrees in their field. To supplement the academic expertise of its residential faculty, the College makes wide use of tutors and adjunct faculty. Tutors are experts normally engaged for short periods of time to work in specific areas related to the academic needs of students, either in learning contracts or evaluation of prior learning. Adjunct faculty are normally employed for longer periods of time to fulfill the specific academic needs of the regional centers, to advise faculty, and to identify and facilitate access to learning resources.

Empire State College is a single statewide institution with no campus. Rather than bring the student to a single location, Empire State instead maintains centers and units of various sizes and locations that bring the focus of advisement, instruction, and evaluation as close to the student as possible. Each of these locations, currently they number 45, offers the entire academic program of the College. The College provides instruction through a network of seven regional centers and three special purpose centers, the Center for Distance Learning and the Office of Graduate Programs, based in Saratoga Springs, and The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. School of Labor Studies in New York City.

The typical administrative structure for these centers consists of a Dean, who is responsible to the President for fiscal and academic leadership; an Associate Dean, who is responsible under the Dean for academic operations; an Assistant Dean, who has primary responsibility for coordinating the assessment of prior learning and assisting in providing other student services; and a corps of faculty mentors, numbering from ten to twenty-five who are responsible for providing direct academic services to between 200 and 600 students. The corps of full-time faculty is supplemented with part-time associate faculty, tutors, and adjuncts in order to assure that student academic needs in the College's eleven areas of study may be met. In addition, the College has established smaller units as outposts of the

regional centers to provide educational opportunities to residents of geographical areas that are not populous enough to support a regional center.

Central administrative and support services for this network of learning locations are provided by the Coordinating Center in Saratoga Springs which houses both the Cabinet-level administrative offices and the various student and other support services under their direct supervision. The functional responsibilities of Coordinating Center staff include: monitoring the quality of academic programs through tertiary review of student programs; monitoring and evaluating the College's success in meeting academic goals and enrollment targets; managing the fiscal and personnel operations of the College; and providing leadership for alumni and other aspects of College development.

Empire State's mission is not primarily to provide educational services for a single, defined population, but to create more effective alternatives for diverse persons or groups. Empire State achieves this goal by responding to students as individuals. Since 1971, more than 15,000 students have earned degrees at the College. Today, more than 6,400 students are enrolled, with 80 percent studying part-time. Ninety-four percent of the students are over 25 years of age (average age is 37), 85 percent are working (70% full-time), two-thirds are married, and two-thirds bring to the College between two and three years of prior learning. The 1987-88 state supported operating budget was just over $16 million with additional revenues coming from grants and contracts. The College has a total of 353 positions. Empire State College expects to grow modestly over the next five years, given the fiscal conditions in the State of New York.

(6) RESULTS

As part of its mission, Empire State College is charged with providing a setting wherein educational alternatives may be demonstrated and tested. Assessment of student learning has been and will continue to be an integral part of the academic program. As a result, more than 180 studies of the College, its program, its students, its faculty, its delivery system, and its costs have been completed. Only a few highlights can be presented here to demonstrate the success of Empire State College. For the reader who wants further information about the College, a special report on outcomes is available from the Office of Research and Evaluation.

Selected Highlights from Program Reviews

--Empire State College was the first public nontraditional institution of higher education to be accredited by a regional accrediting body (in 1974).

--"Empire State College is a fresh new breeze blowing in higher education...An outstanding characteristic of Empire State College is the exceptionally high quality of its administration, faculty, and support staff...ESC...is nationally and internationally known and highly respected; it has set a national standard and in many ways has been a model for nontraditional learning in the United States." (Accreditation Report, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 1979).

--Empire State College was one of eleven colleges and universities from across the country to be cited by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities during their May 1981 presentation of the G. Theodore Mitau Award for Innovation and Change in Higher Education.

--In 1984 the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning recognized Empire State College with an Excellence Award in the Assessment of Prior Learning at its fall National Assembly.

--Empire State College was one of eleven colleges designated to participate in the Association of American Colleges' "Project on Redefining the Meaning and Purpose of the Baccalaureate Degrees" (1985).

--With over 15,000 graduates to date, Empire State College has awarded more degrees than all the other emerging colleges within the State University of New York.

--Over 55% of Empire graduates go on to some form of graduate or professional school.

--Just over 50% of the graduates reported increased job responsibilities, higher pay, promotions, increased professional status, and improved job satisfaction as a direct result of earning an ESC degree.

--Three-quarters of the graduates remain in their communities after graduation, are employed full-time, and contribute to the tax base of the state even more because they are often promoted or enter a new career.

--"Empire State College is one of the two or three institutions of higher education in the United States which is fitting in to the natural learning processes of students"--Dr. Allan Tough, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto, Canada, and author of Adult Learning Projects.

--Empire State College is "nationally recognized as the leader in nontraditional education and lifelong learning," Change magazine, October, 1978.

--"In its years since inception, Empire State College has fulfilled its promises," Dr. Clifton Wharton, former Chancellor, State University of New York and now President, Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association, New York City.

--"Several years ago a reporter in Washington asked me what my greatest satisfaction was reflecting back on the State University of New York. Without a moment's hesitation, I blurted out, 'Empire State College.' I am convinced that it is one of the best educations in the nation and that Empire State is teaching at its best, and I'm convinced that one of the most outstanding faculties in the world works in this distinguished institution." Dr. Ernest Boyer, former Chancellor,

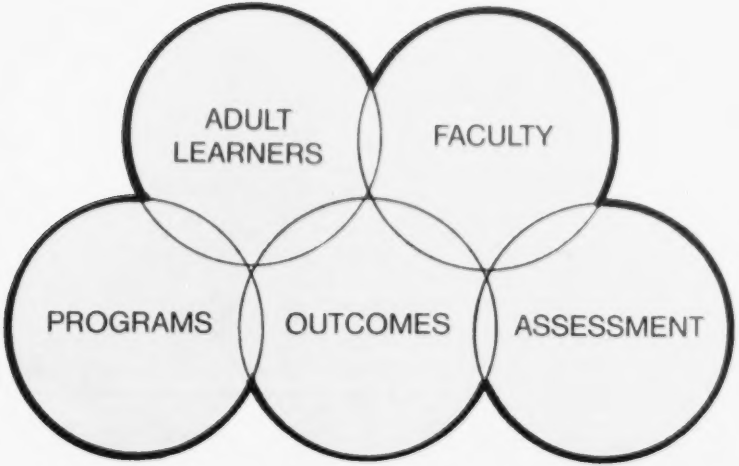
State University of New York and currently President, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1981).

(7) CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Empire State College has demonstrated that its basic approach to individualizing education works well for adult learners. Empire State College has entered into numerous cooperative arrangements over the years, bringing its programs closer to students at their work places, whether it be in corporations, unions, state or community agencies. The College has also located program units at a number of State University campuses, facilitating transfer to a four-year program from community college sites as well as providing alternatives to the existing range of academic programs offered by SUNY. Empire State College has been a member of CAEL (Council on Adult and Experiential Learning) since its founding in 1974 and has contributed ideas, demonstration projects, and program practices to its members.

Today there are more than 400 colleges and universities who use some form of contract learning and/or assessment of prior learning that, in part, have drawn directly or indirectly upon Empire State College ideas, programs, and practices. As an internationally renowned model of innovation and experimentation, Empire State College has hosted educators and policy makers from England, the British Open University in particular, Thailand, Canada, Israel, New Zealand, Nigeria, Australia, Sweden, India, Germany, Holland, Venezeula and Costa Rica. As these lists of programs, organizations, and nations imply, Empire State College has been a part of a growing network of colleges and universities on a world-wide basis who are involved in learner-centered education and providing alternatives for reaching adults.

We consider the success of the Empire State College experiment to be such that many other colleges and universities can adapt, in part or as a whole, the basic features of the model. In fact, many other institutions such as Metropolitan State University (Minnesota), the School for New Learning at DePaul University (Chicago), the Community College of Vermont, Thomas A. Edison State College (New Jersey), Evergreen State College (Washington) and Regents College (New York) embody many of the principles and practices that are part of the Empire State College model. A number of experienced faculty and administrators at Empire State College would be willing to share the lessons they have learned over the years regarding program development and program operations. For 18 years, Empire State College has demonstrated that a high quality program serving adult learners works and that it is cost-effective.



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- you are involved in innovative education
- your institution is serving a wide range of adult learners
- you emphasize "experiential learning"
- you are involved in "individualized education"
- you seek quality outcomes in the educational process — especially if you are interested in a "value-added approach"
- you seek to change the instructional process to be more learner-focused
- you recognize the special challenges and demands of adults who are workers as well as learners
- you are responsible for planning, developing and implementing innovative education, programs for diverse student populations, and programs for adult learners

Emerging Perspectives On Adult Learners

These studies of *students* and *graduates* offer a variety of formats for presenting data on nontraditional education and the adult learner. They explore students':

- educational goals
- background characteristics
- attitudes and motivations for learning
- learning styles and abilities
- work and life experiences
- contributions to the work force and to society

These studies reflect the current national interest in:

- increasing access for adult learners
- improving program quality
- promoting assessment of student learning

"Ten Out of Thirty"

Case studies of the first graduates of Empire State College. **$ 8.25**

"Success After Graduation"

A study of ESC's baccalaureate graduates. **$ 9.60**

"The Adult Learner in Nontraditional Programs"

A review of the research literature on adult learners, their educational goals, perceived barriers to learning, and diverse demographic characteristics. A presentation of data collected over twelve years at Empire State College about adult learners. **$ 9.95**

Faculty As Facilitators Of Adult Learning

These publications identify the role of faculty as mentors, describe stages of mentor development, and present characteristics and opinions of how mentors view this new role. The faculty series:

- analyzes the new professional role of faculty as mentors
- describes stages of mentor development
- presents useful data about:
  - — workload
  - — background characteristics
  - — mentors' views of this new role

"The Empire State College Mentor: An Emerging Role"

A report which: 1) describes the role of a mentor — its most satisfying aspects and its challenges, 2) reviews the literature on this new role, and 3) concludes with a five stage theory of mentor development. **$11.95**

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- how business and community connections with adult programs generate success
- how periodic formative evaluation of existing programs assesses student learning

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Data collected over a decade from Empire State College students are used to test the theories of:

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- how to assess the role of faculty as mentors
- how to determine the kinds of support services useful for older students

"Retention/Attrition at Empire State College"

A major working paper summarizing retention and attrition studies for nontraditional institutions, traditional colleges and Empire State. Strategies for developing an attrition recovery program and an early warning system for attrition-prone adult learners. **$ 9.95**

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Selected case studies of Empire State College graduates describing and analyzing their academic programs and postgraduate activities. **$ 9.25**

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- how to assess "value-added" by the institution or program
- how to present innovative techniques and methodologies
- how to integrate cost with effectiveness studies
- how to make linkages among the five parts of this framework:

1. students
2. faculty
3. program
4. outcomes
5. cost

Four publications comprise the PERC series, presenting a comprehensive, longitudinal, multiple-perspectives evaluation strategy for assessing student learning and improving college decision-making. The "PERC Handbook" depicts the theoretical framework and five variables — students, faculty, programs, outcomes, costs — that guide the assessment of student learning and determine program effectiveness. In "The Methodology of PERC" an innovative methodology is employed which combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques in a "value-added" framework. In "The Uses of PERC," the framework is tested at four institutions — SUNY at Plattsburgh, University of Wisconsin at Green Bay, Hampshire College in Massachusetts, and Northland College, Wisconsin. "Linking Outcomes and Costs" focuses on the crucial need to tie program effectiveness measures to related costs and presents case studies of Empire State's and SUNY-Plattsburgh's efforts to achieve this.

PERC SERIES

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"The Uses of PERC"	**$ 8.00**
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Empire State College, an internationally recognized leader in innovative education, is an arts and science college founded in 1971 as the 64th unit of the State University of New York. Its mission is to meet the educational needs of those persons who require alternatives to the traditional time, place, content, and form of higher education.

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EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

The Master Plan 1988-1992

Collegewide Goals and Strategic Objectives

Empire State College is demonstrating that individualized education, provided largely through non-classroom alternative routes, can be as qualitatively credible as the education achieved in any institution of higher learning. Empire State has forged new ways of working collaboratively with non-academic organizations, including corporations, labor unions, governmental agencies and community groups. The direct focus on the needs of the learner has allowed partnerships to form in service to students in those organizations. As the nation and state address major changes in the way its people work, communicate, travel and learn, it is our conviction that the principles which have guided Empire State College and the State University of New York in the past will help us find new solutions, more effective solutions, for America's educational needs.

The purpose of this *Master Plan, 1988-1992*, is to provide a framework for further College development and to reaffirm, as the College completes its second decade of service, the College's emphasis on programs that are responsive to students and their educational needs. The development of a master plan also provides an opportunity for the College community to bring forth, debate and decide on issues of importance to the College and its future.

For the past five years, the College has been engaged in a process of strategic planning, guided by themes set by the President and developed by regional centers and coordinating center offices. Strategic planning activities have focused on enrollments, academic program, marketing, student services and telecommunications. From these local planning discussions emerged a specific set of goals and objectives for each center and office supported by a detailed schedule of activities to implement those goals. In addition, the strategic planning process provided the source of the goals and objectives contained in this *Master Plan*.

In October 1979, the College community amended the College Bylaws to establish a Program, Planning and Budget Committee (PPBC) as a subcommittee of the Senate. The PPBC has been able to bring together the concerns, issues and ideas that emerged at the various planning meetings. Local strategic plans and various drafts of this *Master Plan* were discussed with the PPBC as well as with the College Council and the Administrative Council.

Those who wrote *A Prospectus for a New University College*, the document that presents the original and continuing concept of the College, stated that Empire State "will represent an expression of faith in a more hopeful future, not yet shaped or perceived, in which higher education can open new paths of learning and fulfillment to every individual within the State of New York." New paths are rarely stumbled on; they are carefully searched for and sometimes even forged through new territory. To find and forge the paths that will take us where we wish to go requires that we know the goals and have some notion of those routes that will lead toward those goals — in short, that we plan.

I believe that the next twenty-five years will be one of the historic periods of opportunity for innovation in American higher education. Innovation works if it is rooted in values and principles found within the society itself. The entire history of American higher education demonstrates the value of increasing inclusiveness and opportunity for people, a continuing push toward democratization. It is within this context that we set forth herein our mission, our goals and our conception of how we might best achieve these goals.

James W. Hall
President
March, 1988

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Part I The Mission

Empire State College was created in 1971 to develop alternate approaches to higher education that would build on and extend the existing strengths and resources of the State University system. Empire State's central mission is to provide and test effective learning alternatives for postsecondary students. This mission requires:

- creating alternate structures to increase *access* for those unable or unwilling to study on campus;
- developing academic *programs* responsive to individual purposes and emerging social needs;
- devising educational teaching and learning *methods* that serve diverse students with widely varied needs; and
- ensuring programs of *high quality* at reasonable cost.

In developing the structure, processes, and curricular strategy to fulfill this basic mission, the College holds to three key educational principles:

- effective learning derives from purposes and needs that are important to the individual;
- learning occurs in varied ways and places; and
- styles of learning and of teaching may differ significantly from person to person and from one setting to another.

These principles inform our educational plan and lead to three primary objectives and corollaries. Empire State College will:

I. Meet the educational needs of those persons who require alternatives to the traditional time, place, content, and form of higher education.

- Provide educational alternatives to those who are prepared to pursue college-level study, recognizing that the College must serve people with a variety of needs and backgrounds.
- Offer, as a statewide institution, educational services to citizens located throughout the State of New York and, in some cases, beyond. As a matter of functional convenience and of administrative and academic accountability, the College establishes service points throughout the State in the form of regional centers and units. These centers and units do not, however, define the geographical limits of service.
- Respond seriously and creatively to students as individuals so that the student's goals, capacities, and needs give shape to the student's study program. Significant responsibility for program planning is placed on the student in consultation with faculty, thus promoting strong student commitment and steady strengthening of student capacities within a context of rigorous, disciplined study.
- Recognize appropriate college-level learning wherever and whenever it occurs and translate such learning into degree standing within the context of the student's goals and needs.
- Seek to help students develop college-level skills, including, among others, reading, writing, and computation skills.

II. Provide a setting within State University wherein educational alternatives may be demonstrated and tested.

In meeting this objective the College utilizes existing resources to avoid unnecessary duplication and to minimize capital construction costs, and works cooperatively with other universities and colleges; with regional public and private organizations; with industrial, labor, governmental, and community bodies. More specifically, the College will:

- Identify and encourage the use of the spectrum of educational resources, including experiential resources, international learning opportunities, and tutorial specialists not located in academic settings.
- Develop on behalf of State University the use of educational telecommunications, including media-aided instruction through television, video and cable systems, interactive computer networks, independent and correspondence study systems. In meeting this objective the College maintains close liaison with the New York Network and works collaboratively with other SUNY institutions.
- Develop new approaches to certification in selected professional areas.
- Create models for the education of those traditionally denied access to college-level learning.
- Establish services for the assessment of student learning in cooperation with other educational institutions.

III. Provide alternative educational services of high quality.

Since 1971, many other institutions have initiated non-traditional programs of study. Empire State College will continue its leadership role by emphasizing high academic quality and by adapting and improving its programs to meet emerging students needs. Systematic program evaluation provides information about the effectiveness of the College and specific ways to provide students with enriched learning opportunities.

Part II A Brief Description

The Empire State College academic program and organizational structure are fully described in the *Empire State College Bulletin* and rigorously evaluated in the 1979 *Self-Study Report*, the 1984 *Periodic Review Report*, and a series of individual center and program evaluations produced by the Office of Research and Evaluation; readers interested in a more detailed view of the College are referred to these important documents. The following briefly describes Empire State College's students, academic program and organizational structure.

Empire State College Students

Empire State College offers alternative approaches to structure, academic program, and educational method for:

- persons who prefer independent study, including those whose years and experience or whose level of motivation and discipline make inappropriate for them an educational model designed for more dependent students;
- persons who seek a high level of individualization in the content of their college degree;
- persons who require flexible time or scheduling arrangements due to family or work responsibilities;
- persons with prior college-level learning who seek academic recognition of the value of that learning; and,
- by-passed persons who require an alternative opportunity for higher education.

Empire State's mission is not primarily to provide educational services for a single, defined population, but to create more effective alternatives for diverse persons or groups. The College achieves this goal by responding to students as individuals. This strategy requires a number of *options* for study — in areas of academic content, in logistical arrangements, and in educational approach. Thus, students' degree programs may range from individualized to traditionally structured plans of study.

The Academic Program

The academic program of the College is designed to enable the College to meet its goals and to fulfill its mission. In particular, the academic program enables students to undertake studies that are consistent with and build on the specific backgrounds, learning styles, and educational needs of each.

Responsiveness to the individual needs of a wide diversity of students requires the College to provide alternative educational approaches. Therefore, the academic programs of the College range along a continuum (see Figure 1) so that each student can select an educational approach appropriate to his or her needs.

The principal delivery of Empire State College academic programs is through the *regional center*, whose administration and faculty are prepared to organize student programs across a range of options and methods. These regional centers are complemented in their delivery of the College program by the offerings of *specialized centers* such as the Center for Distance Learning and The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. School of Labor Studies, which offer options that may be incorporated into a student's contract through a regional center or be pursued directly through enrollment with the specialized center.

Figure 1

Alternative Educational Programs
at Empire State College:
A Conceptual Model

INDIVIDUALIZED DEGREE PROGRAMS					PRESTRUCTURED PROGRAMS	
Student programs individually created with a faculty mentor in one or more of eleven broad academic areas Individually designed learning contracts	Study groups on interdisciplinary topics or areas of special interest	Studio Semester Albany Semester Specialized programs for professional study	Master of Arts, Business, Labor, Culture and Policy Studies Integrated professional and liberal studies with policy studies emphasis	Center for Distance Learning Distance learning courses with tutorial support Media-based courses	Cross-registration at SUNY and independent colleges	The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. School of Labor Studies Established curriculum in Labor Studies largely taught in residential courses Apprenticeship programs

Each student's academic program has three essential components. The first is the individual degree program, which serves as a description of the student's educational goals and an outline of the means to be employed in achieving these goals. The degree program allows considerable latitude in responding to the student's goals and learning needs. The completed document incorporates the student's previous formal studies, college-level learning from nonformal educational activities where these are appropriate to the student's overall goals, and new learning that the student intends to pursue under contract with the College. Thus, the degree program represents a comprehensive statement of the content for which the College will grant either an associate, baccalaureate or master's degree.

The second component, the *assessment of prior learning*, is the documentation and evaluation process for the college-level learning students bring to Empire State and for which the College grants academic credit. The College requires, and through this process ensures, that the learning rather than the experience is documented, that the learning is college-level, that it is evaluated for credit by an approved method (e.g., recognized experts or examinations), and that the learning is appropriate to the degree program the student has undertaken.

The third component is the *learning contract*, the mechanism through which specific segments of the degree program are organized. Student and mentor design the learning contract to meet the learning needs identified in the student's degree program; they plan the content and method of study, the criteria for evaluation, the length of the contract, and the credit to be awarded on its successful completion. Learning contracts are highly flexible, enabling students to undertake unique interdisciplinary studies and to use a variety of approaches to and resources for study.

The student may also include prestructured educational approaches such as self-contained resources and group or residential study. These elements may occur in various combinations in different programs. Such self-contained resources comprise the option provided by the Center for Distance Learning (CDL). Such an option is especially important for those with limited mobility and those in rural locations for whom access to library and other resources is a problem.

The possibility for study with other students is a valuable option for students. The regional centers offer various opportunities for study groups with flexible scheduling arrangements, and The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. School of Labor Studies provides most of its instruction through the classroom. For some students this alternative serves as a useful introduction (or reintroduction) to college study because the support of other students and an external pacing mechanism are reassuring. For some subjects or types of study it allows intellectual interaction and can benefit students who are studying largely on their own.

These study groups are distinct from traditional courses in that they are usually free of the strictures associated with the fixed semester structure: they extend over the number of weeks appropriate to the goals of the study, and they may meet as often as appropriate and at times and places that are convenient. Moreover, study groups are developed around studies or pedagogical approaches not usually available at the traditional campus, and as complementary to the individualized learning approach.

Thus, Empire State provides individual students the opportunity and support for studies most appropriate to their needs in terms of both the subject matter and the method of approaching that subject matter. In these ways, the College is able to accommodate not only those students whose occupational or domestic responsibilities rule out attendance at traditional schools but also those students seeking academic flexibility. Such flexibility allows the possibility of combining studies in various disciplines into a unique degree program or the possibility of undertaking studies through an unusual pedagogical approach.

This systematic focus of the College on the student as an individual with unique academic needs and goals places a special burden on faculty mentors. The faculty bears the primary responsibility for carrying out the College's academic program. This responsibility requires that mentors balance the individual needs of their students with the degree requirements of the College. Maintaining such a balance frequently requires that mentors stretch both themselves and their students to think about the disciplines and their interconnections in new and innovative ways. Moreover, Empire State's mentors engage in a variety of professional activities: direct instruction; development of instructional materials; coordination of external learning resources; recruitment, training, and evaluation of tutors; and, most critically, advisement of students as they develop their individual degree programs. The role of the faculty mentor is thus a complex and demanding one.

Empire State is authorized to offer, through its unique educational approach, individualized, undergraduate programs of study in eleven broad academic areas leading to the Associate in Arts, Associate in Science, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Professional Studies degrees. These eleven areas are:

- The Arts
- Business, Management, and Economics
- Community and Human Services
- Cultural Studies
- Educational Studies
- Historical Studies
- Human Development
- Labor Studies
- Science, Mathematics and Technology
- Social Theory, Social Structure, and Change
- Interdisciplinary Studies

In addition, the College offers the Master of Arts degree in three areas: Business and Policy Studies, Labor and Policy Studies, and Culture and Policy Studies. The graduate program has expanded the College's ability to meet the changing educational needs of New York State residents, an increasing number of whom have already earned the baccalaureate and are interested in advanced education.

The Administrative and Organizational Structure

Empire State College is a single statewide institution with no campus. Rather than bring the student to a single location, Empire State instead maintains centers and units in sizes and locations that bring the locus of advisement, instruction and evaluation as close to the student as possible. Each of these various locations offers the entire academic program of the College. In addition, they develop particular themes for study in response to local situations. Thus, the instructional units of the College are called programs. These instructional locations include: Capital District (Albany), Genesee Valley (Rochester), Long Island (Nassau/Suffolk), Hudson Valley (Westchester/Rockland), Metropolitan (New York City), Niagara Frontier (Buffalo), and North Central (Northeastern and Central New York). The College also establishes, in response to special needs, special-focus centers or programs. The College currently operates two special purpose centers, the Center for Distance Learning, based in Saratoga Springs, and The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. School of Labor Studies in New York City.

The typical administrative structure for these centers consists of a Dean, who is responsible to the President for fiscal and academic leadership; an Associate Dean, who is responsible under the Dean for academic operations; an Assistant Dean, who has primary responsibility for coordinating the assessment of prior learning and assisting in providing other student services; and a corps of faculty mentors, numbering from ten to twenty-five who are responsible for providing direct academic services to between 200 and 600 students. The corps of full-time mentors is supplemented with part-time associate faculty, tutors, and adjuncts in order to assure that student academic needs in the College's eleven areas of study may be met.

In addition, the College has established smaller units as outposts of the regional centers to provide educational opportunities to residents of geographical areas that are not populous enough to require a regional center. They are staffed by one to five faculty members who are responsible for the academic services and administration of the unit. Faculty mentors at the units, who serve between 30 and 100 students annually, rely heavily on community resources, including local tutors and cross-registration opportunities.

Central administrative and support services for this network of learning locations are provided by the Coordinating Center in Saratoga Springs, which houses both the Cabinet-level administrative officers and the various student and other support services under their direct supervision. The functional responsibilities of Coordinating Center staff include: monitoring the quality of academic programs through tertiary review of student programs; monitoring and evaluating the College's success in meeting academic goals and enrollment targets; managing the fiscal and personnel operations of the College; and providing leadership for alumni and other aspects of College development.

Decisions are made and policies formulated through the administrative and governance structures. The President, Vice-Presidents, Assistant Vice-Presidents, and Deans comprise the Administrative Council, which advises the President. The Council plays a major role in shaping policy through its advisory function. This body is also important as a communicative link between Coordinating Center administrators and the regional centers.

The By-laws of the College define a governance structure consisting of a College Senate and five standing committees of the Senate: the Academic Personnel Committee, the Professional Personnel Committee, the Academic Policy and Learning Programs Committee, the Student Affairs Committee, and the Program, Planning, and Budget Committee. Two of the prerogatives of the College Senate are especially relevant to decision-making: the Senate may initiate proposals, and it may receive and act on recommendations it receives from its standing committees or from the College administration. Particularly in a geographically dispersed College, a well-functioning governance structure ensures representation of all centers in consideration of significant policy issues and other concerns of the College.

The College currently has seven regional centers located in the State's major population areas and two special purpose centers. To meet the educational needs of the citizens of New York and to meet future maximum and optimum enrollment projections, the College anticipates that at least one additional regional center will be required in Central New York (Syracuse/Utica/Binghamton) and expects to explore the need for other locations in such areas as Brooklyn, Long Island and Rockland County.

Capital District Regional Center

The Capital District Regional Center provides the full range of Empire State College educational programs while also carrying a special mission to serve the educational needs of public employees in New York State, as well as of any student wishing to incorporate public-affairs learning within his or her academic program. Developing new approaches to an effective and meaningful integration of liberal and professional studies is an important concern of the center, as is the development of special educational, assessment, training, public service, and research opportunities specifically in the public-affairs area.

The Capital District Regional Center operates from its main location in downtown Albany and through seven units in the region. Units are located at Columbia-Greene Community College in Hudson, Hudson Valley Community College in Troy, Schenectady County Community College in Schenectady, the NYS Office of General Services, the NYS Department of Social Services, the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance and the Center for the Disabled. The Capital District Regional Center also administers the Albany Semester Program (ASP) — an undergraduate intern program placing 90-100 students annually in NYS agencies for semester-length periods — for a consortium of SUNY campuses across the State.

Genesee Valley Regional Center

The Genesee Valley Regional Center has developed the broad academic competencies and the detailed connections to regional educational institutions, government agencies, social service organizations, and regional and statewide industry that allow it to serve a wide geographical region and a diverse student body effectively. The center has its headquarters in downtown Rochester with additional units at Alfred, Auburn, Canandaigua, Corning and Ithaca. Cooperative programs with two-year institutions (units at Community College of the Finger Lakes, Cayuga Community College, and State University College at Alfred); with industry (for example, Xerox and the newspaper industry); with social and State agencies coupled with the development of center commitment to academic quality and administrative effectiveness, have built a strong base for future program development and innovation. The center emphasizes cooperative relationships with the community colleges and cooperative relationships with and service to regional and statewide industry.

Long Island Regional Center

The Long Island Regional Center has its main administrative headquarters at Old Westbury and substantial branch locations at Stony Brook and Hauppauge. In response to population growth on eastern Long Island, the center plans to expand services at the Hauppauge location once additional space becomes available. The range of higher education institutions on and the geographical spread of Long Island make cooperative educational ventures particularly attractive for this center, and ties with State University campuses and with community colleges on Long Island are strong. In addition, this center has established a particular emphasis and expertise in working with local government to meet the educational needs of public employees. It has also worked with the Long Island Section of the American Society of Quality Control to respond to the educational needs of their professional members.

Hudson Valley Regional Center

The Hudson Valley Regional Center serves both sides of the lower and mid-Hudson River through its main administrative headquarters in Hartsdale and a branch location in Rockland County. In addition, units are operated at New Paltz and Orange County Community College in Middletown with an extension at Sullivan Community College in Loch Sheldrake. This center has been very active over the past several years in developing cooperative arrangements with the State and federal prisons and with other public agencies with a substantial presence in the Lower Hudson area. These initiatives will continue over the period of this *Plan*.

Metropolitan Regional Center

The Metropolitan Regional Center, in addition to its main office in Manhattan, has established neighborhood units in Bedford-Stuyvesant, the South Bronx, and the Lower East Side. The center has maintained and acted on a strong commitment to serving the extraordinary diversity of persons that New York City represents. Within the center, the Studio Arts Semester hosts professionally oriented studio arts students from State University campuses, including Empire State, for a semester of intensive involvement in the extraordinary opportunities offered by the City to engage in apprenticeships, attend special critiques and workshops, view ongoing and special exhibits. In addition, a summer program for students in photojournalism has been developed.

Niagara Frontier Regional Center

The Niagara Frontier Regional Center serves a four-county area of Western New York and draws a small number of students from Pennsylvania and Southern Ontario. The general administrative offices of the center are in Buffalo, where most students from Erie County and the area around Niagara Falls come to meet their mentors. There is a unit in Lockport serving the rest of Niagara County and neighboring areas, and there is a unit in Chattauqua County with offices at both State University College at Fredonia and Jamestown Community College. The center also has a full-time advisor-mentor at Erie Community College who coordinates a program to facilitate transfer of minority students to baccalaureate level programs; this is currently supported by a grant from the Ford Foundation. A contract with Erie County supports a program serving about fifty Department of Social Services personnel with concentrations in areas of business and administration. In addition, the Niagara Frontier Regional Center provides educational opportunities for a small number of inmates at two correctional facilities.

The center is committed to inter-institutional collaboration as a way to provide learning opportunities for many students such as articulation agreements with community colleges; close working relations with SUNY College faculty at Fredonia and Buffalo; collaboration with a local theatre and a playwriters workshop opening new avenues for study in drama for adult students; a relationship with a research institute giving our students access to faculty members in science and technology.

North Central Regional Center

The North Central Regional Center provides regional outlets for the broad College academic program for students in the north and northeast and in the central and the southern tiers of New York State. Presently located at Plattsburgh, Utica/Rome, Syracuse, Watertown, Binghamton, Glens Falls, Johnstown, Cobleskill and Saratoga Springs, these units have been highly innovative in finding ways to bring the broad College program to students while sharing academic resources across a wide geographical area. In addition, a new adult residency program called *Forum* has become an important option for students in the Syracuse area. With adequate funding, the College projects the development of a new central and southern tier regional center by 1990.

The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. School of Labor Studies

The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. School of Labor Studies, located in New York City, is a program designed to enable working people, especially those involved in the labor movement, to enhance their understanding of the history and present scope of the institutions that shape their situation in contemporary society. The Van Arsdale School has already developed a significant national reputation in the area of labor studies and will strengthen its position through curriculum improvement and applied research. The School has developed new specialities within the labor studies concentration including Occupational Safety and Health, Jointly-Administered Benefit Fund Administration and Working Women's Studies.

The College has made a concerted effort to increase the size of the faculty and staff at the School to enable this important and unique program to fulfill its potential as the benchmark program in labor studies. An apprentice-linked program in cooperation with the Joint Industry Board of the Electrical Industry illustrates the flexibility of and need for the Empire State College program in labor studies. The School is also in a unique position to do research in that it is located in Manhattan and has close ties to the New York City labor movement. The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. School of Labor Studies will seek to capitalize on this advantage by developing a cadre of advanced students to assist faculty research and secure external funding to aid in the curriculum development and research efforts of the center.

Center for Distance Learning

The Center for Distance Learning (CDL) provides a distance-learning alternative based on a structured sequence of studies and courses offered through independent study courses and media-aided instruction. This program is a complement or alternative for those who prefer independent but prestructured study and for those whose geographical or physical circumstances make it difficult or impossible for them to relate to a regional center or unit. Relying largely on existing resources, the center is focusing its efforts on degree programs in business (including a specialization in fire services administration), in human services, and in interdisciplinary studies. Student demand comes equally from students already matriculated at other Empire State centers as well as from students who want to matriculate solely with CDL. Thus the center is able to serve as a valuable resource for the College as a whole as well as to provide an alternative degree option for students.

The Center for Distance Learning is currently administered by the Dean of the North Central Regional Center.

The Graduate Program

Empire State College offers three Master of Arts programs centered around a policy studies theme, with emphases in Business, Culture, and Labor. These programs allow mid-career professionals holding positions of responsibility in government, labor unions, industry, and community organizations, to understand their professional areas from a broader liberal arts perspective.

A distinctive feature of the programs is that they are interinstitutional in both their governance and in their instructional mode. Empire State College acts as the coordinating agent for purposes of program administration, and it provides core faculty for the programs. Additional faculty are drawn from appropriately qualified faculties of other SUNY and independent institutions through cooperative arrangements.

The non-residential format of these programs allows students to study at a distance from their mentors between the three-day residencies which open each semester. This format provides for a mixture of independent study and direct interaction with peers and faculty. Students who would not otherwise be able to pursue graduate study because of highly demanding travel schedules, personal and professional lives, and geographical remoteness have been given an opportunity to earn a graduate degree.

Continuing Education and Public Service

Created in 1985, the Office of Continuing Education and Public Service develops and coordinates special projects, custom-designed training for organizations and agencies, and non-credit extension programs. The office facilitates outreach through community service projects, creates opportunities for staff and faculty development and develops experimental projects and programs that have a statewide or national scope.

Major activities include national and regional conferences, an Apprenticeship Project that provides vocational and technical training for State workers, a program to provide college counseling and career development services to CSEA members, a Community Forum series, a cooperative training project with the Adirondack Educational Consortium of Hospital Organizations, an extension program to provide management proficiency assessment services to companies and organizations, and consulting services for State agencies on mentoring as a tool for organizational and professional development.

International Education

In order to respond to educational possibilities in the international arena, the College has recently established an Office of International Education with the goals of strengthening existing strategies that it currently employs such as learning contracts developed with a mentor at home and completed abroad and learning units located abroad as well as to develop new initiatives. The College has a unit in Jerusalem, Israel, providing students the opportunity to develop individualized degree programs drawing on the special resources of Israel. In addition, the College operates a program in Cyprus in cooperation with the Frederick Polytechnic University, developing Empire State College's potential to assist foreign governments in achieving their own goals of extending educational opportunity to ever larger segments of their populations.

Part III Collegewide Goals and Strategic Objectives 1988 - 1992

Empire State College's goals and strategic objectives are driven by service to students and the educational needs of the State of New York. They build on the existing strengths of the College and its highly successful educational approaches. Empire State College has, in the past seventeen years, created, developed and refined unique and successful educational models. The College has developed solid skills and expertise in fostering independent study, designing degree plans, assessing prior learning, and coordinating a complex statewide operation. More than 14,000 graduates attest to Empire State's past success. These strengths and skills are the building blocks upon which these goals and objectives rest. Distilled from regional center and coordinating center office strategic plans, these strategic objectives will guide our decisions in the period ahead. Continued success in an increasingly competitive environment requires clear goals, widely supported objectives and strategic action plans to achieve them.

GOAL I
EVALUATE AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EXISTING ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Objective 1: Conduct An Institutional Self-Study and Achieve Reaccreditation

During 1988-1989, a major focus of College activity will be preparation for successful reaccreditation by the Middle States Association and re-registration of our programs by the New York State Education Department.

In preparing for the institutional self-study, Empire State College will complete reviews of existing academic programs and develop a detailed agenda for academic program development and improvement.

Objective 2: Increase Student Retention

A certain number of adult students attend Empire State College for a brief time as a way of deciding whether its program is compatible with their educational goals and interests. Still others leave after a relatively short time due to unforeseen conflicts with their job and family responsibilities. Consequently, a certain amount of student attrition is to be expected. But other students who may well be successful in completing the Empire State program also leave prematurely. The College needs to find ways to enable such students to succeed.

Many students use their initial enrollment period in the College and their first experience with contract learning as a time of exploration. Following this exploratory first contract study, approximately 63% of students choose to re-enroll at Empire State College.

During the period of this Master Plan, the College will seek to understand better the causes of student attrition and develop the qualities of the academic program and student support services that enhance retention. We will seek to improve student re-enrollment and retention by a 10% rate in 1990 and an additional 10% by 1992.

Objective 3: Enhance the Quality of Faculty Worklife

Enhancing the quality of faculty worklife and professional satisfaction is a key to maintaining academic program quality. To meet this goal, *the College will develop initiatives to strengthen the professional role of mentor* including:

- Establishing a long-range staffing plan;
- Increasing opportunities and support for faculty research and professional development;
- Increasing faculty development activities for new and experienced mentors;
- Creating additional opportunities for consequential faculty leadership;
- Clarifying the role of mentor in relation to the need for additional student support services;
- Strengthening the periodic performance appraisal for tenured mentors.

Objective 4: Improve and Expand the Assessment and Award of Credit for Prior Learning

The assessment of prior learning, a central feature and important strength of the academic program, is a long and complex process that is demanding of College resources. In particular, the assessment process as presently conducted involves many steps and substantial reliance on outside evaluators to supplement the faculty expertise available at any given center. The College needs to analyze and examine all aspects of the assessment process and the assumptions underlying the College's concept of advanced standing and to organize the resources of the total College staff in new ways to strengthen the assessment process.

The College will improve both the ease and consistency of assessment at Empire State.

Empire State has established a national reputation for leadership in the assessment of prior learning. In recognition of this expertise, several SUNY campuses have turned to Empire State for assistance in assessment. SUNY's ability to serve adult students throughout the State would be enhanced by formal arrangements and mechanisms whereby students from any State University campus can be assessed for advanced standing by Empire State.

Empire State will develop and coordinate an Assessment Center for cooperating State University institutions.

Objective 5: Improve Student Study Skills

Empire State College will help students to develop the advanced study skills necessary for independent and lifelong learning. Among the skills critical to the ability to engage in independent study are advanced reading, writing, library, research methodology, and computational skills.

Empire State College will develop strategies to diagnose the various skills levels of entering students and will identify or prepare learning materials and projects to bring students to higher levels of competence in these areas.

Objective 6: Strengthen Resources to Support Learning

An ongoing goal of Empire State College is to deliver high quality, innovative, alternative programs to students by providing exceptional academic and community resources that enable students to complete their programs successfully. Empire State's basic approach emphasizes access to rather than possession of such resources. Cooperative links enable our students to turn to various organizations and institutions to meet their resource needs. Students use a wide range of resources including libraries, classroom cross-registration, correspondence courses, internships, and community activities.

Although significant responsibility for gaining access to resources rests on students, College coordination and support is needed to ensure the quality, consistency, and timely availability of resources.

Empire State College will evaluate and strengthen its ties to diverse, high-quality institutional, community and human resources and develop improved systems to manage and access them in each region. The College will also emphasize instructing students and assisting mentors on how to identify and access these resources.

GOAL II
DESIGN NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM INITIATIVES RESPONSIVE TO EMERGING STUDENT NEEDS

An important aspect of the mission of Empire State College is to provide innovative educational alternatives that expand access to new student clienteles while adapting to new student demands. During the next five years, the College intends to place special emphasis on the following academic program initiatives.

Objective 1: Seek New Registered Programs

The College offers individualized academic programs within eleven broad areas but has not offered professional certification options in areas such as teacher education, allied health professions or certified public accountancy. Adult student interest in professional and technical areas has continued to grow as has the College's capacity to provide such educational services. Because students now face increased demands from employers for technological skills and knowledge, *the College will develop new program registrations and re-organize its current areas of study to meet the changing needs and interests of its adult student body.* We will explore the areas of allied health, technology and an academic math and science core program that can be pursued by students in different technological specializations.

Objective 2: Emphasize Inter-Institutional Cooperation

Inter-institutional cooperation is of prime importance for Empire State College: our entire educational program is predicated on cooperative relations with public and private colleges and universities throughout the State, with local community and governmental organizations, and with private business, industry and labor. The College has established a network of agreements with other institutions and will increase the range and diversity of these relationships in the coming years.

One of the most gratifying and successful experiments of Empire State's regional centers has been the establishment of units on the campus of two-year colleges. Empire State's unique academic approach allows it to develop innovative "topping programs" for two-year college graduates, enabling them to gain skills and education that contribute to personal advancement and public economic growth. With careful coordination of unit resources with those of the regional centers, many adults in underserved areas now have access to baccalaureate study.

Empire State College will continue to enhance its statewide presence by supporting and developing units in cooperation with community colleges that extend educational opportunities to students in areas that are currently underserved.

Education has been described as the single most important investment to achieve a strong industrial and commercial society. Many of Empire State's students are already employed in New York industry and seek from the College additional education and skills to continue to grow in their occupation or career. In response to the social, technological, and demographic changes taking place in the economic environment of New York State, *the College will continue to enter into cooperative arrangements with corporations and labor organizations* to pursue the following objectives:

- Provide opportunities for highly trained employees to broaden their educational background, integrating technological studies undertaken on the job with related liberal learning leading to a degree;
- Assist special constituencies identified by industry as having special needs for further education, advanced study skills, or other educational services;
- Stress the capacity of Empire State's programs to incorporate field and work experience within a degree program.

Objective 3: Expand Continuing Education

Empire State College will continue to expand its continuing education and public service programs through special projects, custom-designed training for organizations and agencies, and non-credit extension programs. These programs will facilitate Empire State College's community outreach, create opportunities for staff and faculty development and involve experimental projects with a statewide or national scope.

Many adult students wish to undertake collegiate study for reasons other than earning a degree. Special-purpose training programs and home-based education are two options that especially lend themselves to non-degree study. Some of the course offerings of the Center for Distance Learning are appropriate to the non-matriculated student. And contract study is easily adaptable to a variety of interests and purposes. For example, a reading and discussion program with the mentor serving as an intellectual coach for post-baccalaureate students is a possibility. Through these and other options, Empire State will create possibilities for non-degree students to move in and out of the College according to individual long-range plans and immediate interests.

Empire State will encourage, through appropriate programs and supports, the enrollment of students who may be less interested in a college degree than in engaging a study of interest.

Objective 4: Develop Learning Opportunities through Telecommunications

New communications technologies can enable faculty to make more efficient use of their time with students and enable institutions to reduce substantially students' dependence on campus facilities. Both possibilities hold high potential for Empire State College with its largely tutorial and labor-intensive academic approach and its geographic dispersion. Through an integrated system which unites the technology with our pedagogy, Empire State College can enhance access to higher education, link students to needed learning resources, and facilitate communication between distant students and mentors.

Empire State College, in collaboration with SUNY, will develop flexible models for media-based delivery systems including:

- Experimentation with video via cable systems, open broadcast in cooperation with public television, and through the New York Network;
- Use of home-based technologies (e.g., microcomputers, videodisc players and video recorders);
- Interactive use of computer networks and communications capabilities.

Objective 5: Improve Service to Minority Students

The College will respond to the increasing proportion of minorities in the population profile of New York State and improve the recruitment and retention of current minority students by:

- Developing a recruitment strategy and plan for serving adult minority students from such sources as community colleges, labor unions, public service agencies and organizations;
- Evaluating existing programs as to their effectiveness in meeting the needs of minority students;
- Continuing our commitment to a strong affirmative action program to attract minority faculty and staff.

Objective 6: Expand Graduate Study

Empire State College will develop new graduate programs which will serve mature individuals through individualized study and distance learning, approaches which have not generally been available at the graduate level. Among the new graduate areas to be explored are public affairs, allied health and fine arts.

Objective 7: Experiment with International Programming

Empire State College will continue to experiment with special approaches to international study including:

- Mentored units in a location abroad;
- Short travel residencies that make use of the resources of overseas locations;
- Individualized intercultural study programs for corporate employees incorporating studies of language, culture, economics, and travel;
- Contractual services to provide training programs for international agencies;
- Consulting services to provide expertise in open learning to foreign nations.

Objective 8: Create A National Center on Adult Learning

Empire State College will increase its visibility and leadership in the fields of adult and innovative learning and research. An important new forum for such activity will be the establishment of a National Center on Adult Learning.

The Center seeks to improve the state of the art regarding theory research and effective practice of adult learning. To do this, the Center will:

- Develop a consortium of interested institutions;
- Plan and hold national conferences;
- Establish and maintain a national clearinghouse of information on adult learner research;
- Inform public policy about the theory and practice of adult learning;
- Establish appropriate means of communication among Center constituencies.

The Center will strengthen Empire State's connections with others interested in adult learning, innovation and change and attract graduate students and scholars to the College. The College places high priority on developing and seeking funding for the Center.

GOAL III
SUPPORT INSTITUTIONAL GROWTH AND STRENGTHEN ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Objective 1: Continue Enrollment Growth

As additional resources are obtained, the College will continue the planned moderate growth of existing heavily enrolled units and centers and develop an increased presence in Central New York and Long Island. *Enrollment is projected to increase from 4185 FTE in 1987-88 to 4385 in 1992-93.*

Objective 2: Establish Enrollment Management Systems

Achieving mandated enrollment targets and stabilizing our enrollment base requires the establishment of an effective enrollment management system. During this period, the College intends to:

- Create an efficient and timely enrollment information system;
- Develop a collegewide information management system to meet longer range management and marketing needs;
- Develop a model information system suitable for use by all centers and units of the College.

Objective 3: Undertake Marketing Initiatives

The College will undertake a significant marketing initiative. As a first phase, Empire State College will conduct a market research study that evaluates changes in student demand and satisfaction and informs College planning. The second phase will develop and implement a full scale marketing plan. Additional marketing surveys will continue throughout the period to understand better Empire State College's market position among current and potential students.

Objective 4: Strengthen the Planning Process

In order to keep the institution vital and able to meet the challenges of the future and to promote a shared understanding of institutional goals and objectives, *the College will reaffirm and deepen its commitment to strategic planning* by:

- Updating the Master Plan for the period 1988-92;
- Establishing collegewide strategic goals and objectives and plans to implement those goals;
- Preparing and responding to regional center and coordinating center office strategic plans;
- Reviewing and revising the strategic planning process for the next planning period, 1990-1995;
- Linking planning, budgeting and management more consistently.

Objective 5: Enhance Empire State College's Reputation and Fiscal Resource Base

The development effort at Empire State College has a threefold goal: to create an understanding and recognition of the College's purposes and programs within the State and nation, to promote State fiscal support for College programs, and to provide resources beyond the State appropriation to support the program development efforts of the College.

The College will intensify its development effort with particular emphasis on strengthening community and governmental relations, building focused corporate and labor support, obtaining significant institutional grants, attracting endowments for student financial aid and launching a major endowment campaign.

Objective 6: Improve the Budget Process

By strengthening the planning process, *the College intends to create the capability to make rational choices in relation to strategic goals and to allocate resources in support of College objectives and priorities.* This process will include delegation of greater budget flexibility, initiative and responsibility to each center supported by timely, accurate and interactive budget and expenditure reporting systems.

Objective 7: Improve Administrative Support

Effective operation of a statewide, dispersed College requires constant attention to ways of improving our practice and methods of communication. *Empire State College intends to launch a concerted effort to improve administrative effectiveness and productivity by:*

- Implementing a system of office goal-setting, periodic review and response in the context of strategic planning;
- Improving functional relationships between regional centers and coordinating center offices;
- Strengthening and improving regional center administrative and support structures;
- Improving the quality of the College's management information systems;
- Extending the management appraisal performance process.

Objective 8: Implement Computing and Telecommunications Systems

The College believes that computer and telecommunications technologies offer great promise for improving administrative efficiency and intends to:

- Focus efforts on developing and implementing supportive telecommunications and computer systems in response to the strategic goals of the College;
- Coordinate the acquisition and maintenance of systems and the development of telecommunications capabilities;
- Train academic and support staff in the use of new technologies.

Part IV Enrollment and Budget Planning

Over the next five years, competition for support for programs that receive public financing will continue to intensify. In the area of higher education, the number of 18 to 22-year-olds will continue to decline, but the number of potential students who require alternative, non-residential approaches to learning will continue to increase. Within this context, there are opportunities for new initiatives and new program approaches which provide the services that adult students require. Empire State must position itself in such a way as to expand its role as a leader in the field of delivery of services to this growing population.

I. Enrollment Projections

The College mission clearly describes service to non-residential students. Most of these students are adults who require academic programs flexible enough for them to continue to meet other work, family, and community responsibilities while pursuing a college degree. The number of older students who require such an academic program has increased substantially in recent years, and this growth is projected to continue. These adults, already well-educated by earlier standards, will seek still more education as they pursue career and personal goals. Empire State College is already well-positioned to meet these needs.

All indications are that the competition for adult students will intensify over the next decade. But the proposals set forth in this *Master Plan* will enable the College to remain in the forefront not only in innovation but also in quality. As a result, Empire State College will both attract greater numbers from among the student groups it currently serves and develop educational options for wholly new student populations. Thus we see strong opportunities for enrollment growth in the next five to ten years.

Balancing this need for our academic programs with the reality of public funding, Empire State College projects a pattern of growth as follows:

Empire State College
Projections for Growth

FTE	Fiscal Year
4185	1987-88
4185	1988-89
4235	1989-90
4285	1990-91
4335	1991-92
4385	1992-93

The growth that is projected is modest indeed but realistic when considering competition for public funding. Given the appropriate financial support, these enrollment projections could easily be exceeded.

II. Budget Planning Issues

The State of New York has strongly supported the development of Empire State College over its first 17 years. In general, the cost of instruction (I&DR) is comparable to the cost at other SUNY Arts and Sciences Colleges ($2,600 per FTEQ in 1987-88), while the College's overall cost (E&G) is about 25% less ($3,910* per FTEQ for Empire State College vs. $5,150 for the Arts and Sciences College average in 1987-88), permitting significant cost savings to the State University of New York. Unfortunately, the level of support has eroded in the face of increased enrollment and inflation. A number of areas require systematic improvement in order to maintain the quality of the academic program for students while Empire State College continues to respond to new needs. The College views the following areas as key budgetary needs.

*This figure does not include rental costs.

Student/Faculty Ratio

For some years, the College has sought to lower its student/faculty ratio and has achieved modest success. We believe that our current 25.5:1 ratio remains too high. The trend within New York State, however, has been to allow the student/faculty ratio at our sister Arts and Sciences Colleges to rise to about 20:1.

Empire State College will seek to lower its student/faculty ratio to 22:1 by 1993.

Student/Faculty Ratios
1987-1993

Ratio	FTE Faculty Lines*	Fiscal Year
25.5/1	164	1987-88
25.5/1	164	1988-89
24.5/1	173	1989-90
24/1	178.5	1990-91
23/1	188	1991-92
22/1	199	1992-93

*The addition of faculty lines is projected in relation to the enrollment increases previously outlined.

Accessory Instruction

The area of accessory instruction (AI) is especially important to Empire State College. The use of AI funds is an integral part of the College's academic program because it provides the means to combine a high degree of flexibility with a high degree of rigor. The College is required by the State Education Department to maintain a full-time mentor at each regional center for each of the College's eleven registered areas of study. But no college can adequately offer a broad curriculum with many specialized topics with a few faculty at any one location. Our educational model requires that the College engage numerous part-time tutors and evaluators to work in conjunction with the full-time mentors. It is through accessory instruction funds that the College is able to supplement the core faculty of each individual center with the expertise of the tutors and evaluators it needs in order to meet individual student demand in wide areas of intellectual inquiry.

Empire State College will seek to establish its accessory instruction funding formula at $200 per FTE student by 1993.*

Growth of Accessory Instruction

AI $ Per FTE Student	Fiscal Year
$157	1987-88
$157	1988-89
$170	1989-90
$180	1990-91
$190	1991-92
$200	1992-93

*All dollars are in 1988 dollars.

Funding for Part-time Students

Among SUNY's Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Empire State College has the highest proportion of part-time students. Over the years, the College's proportion of part-time students has climbed from 45% in 1972 to 84% in 1988. Because of this high number of part-time students, the College must enroll many more headcount students to generate an FTE of 4185. In addition, the stopping in and out pattern of adult student enrollment requires the College to handle still more students during the year. Thus, Empire State College is a college with almost twice the number of student headcount as its FTE numbers indicate.

The impact of the part-time student phenomenon on institutional workload and delivery of academic and student support services is substantial. One part-time student requires the same amount of support as one full-time student from such general administrative functions as admissions, academic records, financial aid, student billing, placement and counseling services. In addition, academic advisement tasks such as degree program planning and preparing the portfolio of prior learning must be provided equally to full- and part-time students. FTE is a measure of *instructional* workload, but it fails to take into account the impact of a high proportion of students on *institutional* workload.

Empire State College will work with its sister SUNY institutions to seek a modification in the present FTE formula to include recognition of the special institutional workload for older part-time students.

Telecommunications Initiatives

A major budget priority for Empire State College is to harness telecommunications technologies in improving educational opportunities for non-residential students. For the past several years, the College has laid the groundwork for a telecommunications system that links our centers and units through an electronic network that is accessible to students from their homes. Funding for this network has come from reallocations within the operating budget and support from the student computing access program. In addition, the College proposes to develop a statewide instructional telecourse system in cooperation with the New York Network. Computer networking and televised instruction offer tremendous possibilities in expanding higher education to populations currently underserved as well as enhancing the quality of education for currently enrolled off-campus students.

The College should be able to maintain its existing computer network through a combination of resource reallocation within the operating budget and continued support from the student computing access program. In addition, we intend to seek external funding from public and private granting agencies to support experimental efforts in utilizing our innovative pedagogical approaches in conjunction with these new technologies. But the College needs to add technological and instruction design expertise to its current staff in order to support the integration of these new technologies and existing instructional programs which are ideally suited to such new applications.

By 1993, the College intends to create an instructional resources staff in the area of telecommunications consisting of the following functions:

- Associate Dean for Instructional Telecommunications;
- Technical Support;
- Electronic Library Services;
- Academic Data Base Access Services.

Student Support Services

At present both faculty and support personnel try to meet student need for support and assistance in such areas as financial aid, billing and career counseling. This is an area where the College will seek to improve services to students by providing a student support person at each regional center.

Empire State will seek a student support position for each of our Regional Centers by 1993.

Student Support

Positions	Fiscal Year
3	1987-88
4	1988-89
5	1989-90
6	1990-91
7	1991-92
9	1992-93

Improvement of Facilities

The only buildings owned by Empire State College are its administrative headquarters in Saratoga Springs. The more than 40 centers and units of the College occupy rented or state-owned space. Since 1985 office rental costs have nearly doubled, moving from $590,000 to $950,000 in the current fiscal year. The College has negotiated advantageous leases and has made extensive use of State facilities in order to hold rental costs in check, but substantial inflation in this area represents an ongoing drain on College resources. In addition, some of our locations have outgrown their current space and require new locations. We project increasing rental costs.

The College will maintain modest but attractive regional center and unit facilities and seek to use additional contributed or low-cost space to accommodate growth.

Committed Facilities Costs
1987-1993

Rental Costs	Fiscal Year
$ 900,000	1987-88
$ 953,300	1988-89
$1,088,000	1989-90
$1,119,000	1990-91
$1,154,000	1991-92
$1,155,000	1992-93

Equipment Replacement

The cost of equipment replacement for Empire State College is a necessary priority. A conservative estimate of our current equipment base is approximately $1.2 million. Assuming an amortization period of 15 years, again an extremely conservative estimate, the College requires $80,000 per year in order to replace its current inventory. This funding is needed in addition to new purchases such as office automation equipment.

Inflationary Increases

The special requirements of an institution in dispersion have placed an especially heavy burden on the College in such areas as mail, travel and telephone costs. We have made many changes in how the business of the College is conducted which have resulted in containment of these costs. But because of the dispersed nature of the College, it is difficult to achieve cost reductions in the area of basic services and travel without jeopardizing the quality of the program.

The College will continue to contain costs for mail, telephone and travel but, at the same time, keep pace with inflation and continue to provide high quality educational services to students across New York State.

III. Conclusion

Despite these urgent budgetary needs, the College sees considerable justification for cautious optimism. Optimism is warranted because there is substantial need for our services and because the College has the capacity to grow and change as circumstances dictate. The College also plans to work vigorously to attract significant new funding from private sources, including individual donors. The corporate sector may be especially helpful in providing substantial funding to retrain employees. Indeed, in some cases, there would seem to be a clear invitation to the College to develop cooperative arrangements with industry for this purpose. Empire State's decentralized structure and its abundant experience working with adults provide the basis for solid cooperative relationships between Empire State and the corporate world, the labor movement and the public sector.

Out of this assessment of the environment emerges a sense of the future, a future where imagination and careful planning can make the institution grow in stature. It is certain that distinctive programs intelligently designed will be as necessary five years from now as they are today. It is likewise certain that Empire State College has a seventeen-year experiential advantage in knowing how to develop programs for adults and implement them successfully — and students in the 35 to 44-year-old group will increase substantially in absolute numbers for the balance of this century. In sum, it is reasonable to project increasing enrollments for Empire State College, but enrollments that will, because of the fiscal realities, increase less rapidly than they otherwise might and that will require private as well as the traditional public sources for support.

Appendices

Appendix A
Enrollments

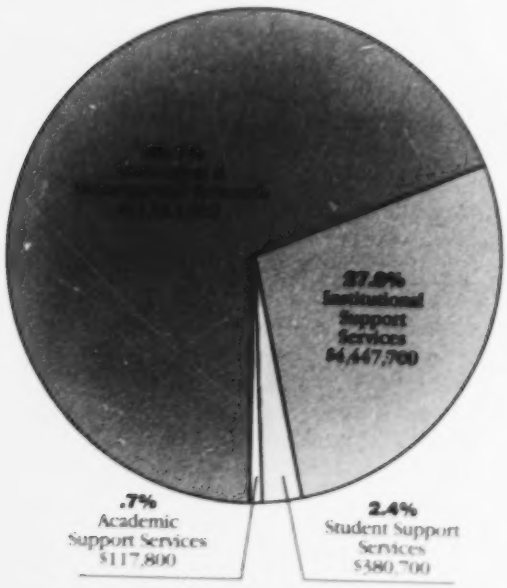
Year	Annual Average Full-Time Enrollment
1972-73	1134
1973-74	1768
1974-75	2378
1975-76	3390
1976-77	3241
1977-78	3114
1978-79	3219
1979-80	3174
1980-81	3639
1981-82	3653
1982-83	3614
1983-84	3582
1984-85	3842
1985-86	3820
1986-87	4250

Source: Statistical Release No. 144, Comparison of Budgeted and Actual Annual Average F.T.E. Workload, p. 4, SUNY, Office of Institutional Research, October 27, 1987.

Appendix B
Budgets

Year	Annual Operating Budget
1971-72	860,000
1972-73	2,600,000
1973-74	3,905,600
1974-75	4,760,000
1975-76	5,706,000
1976-77	6,270,500
1977-78	6,242,200
1978-79	6,939,600
1979-80	7,771,700
1980-81	8,524,600
1981-82	9,463,200
1982-83	10,113,700
1983-84	10,842,400
1984-85	11,867,200
1985-86	12,559,000
1986-87	14,917,100
1987-88	16,008,100
1988-89	16,854,100 (est.)

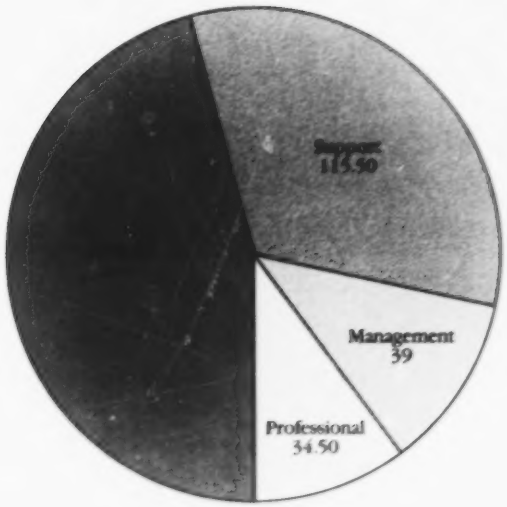
1987-1988 Expenditures



Source: Empire State College Final Budget Requests

Appendix C

Positions 1987-1988



TOTAL 553

Appendix D
Graduates

Year	Degrees						TOTAL
	MA	BA	BS	BPS	AA	AS	
1972		30	4		3	2	39
1973		132	74		8	8	222
1974		370	260		24	6	660
1975		288	469	1	18	15	791
1976		276	699	55	11	41	1082
1977		222	664	127	16	64	1093
1978		182	557	127	20	71	957
1979		188	619	116	23	75	1021
1980		134	527	117	22	95	895
1981		128	412	112	33	101	786
1982		148	445	103	36	144	876
1983		156	508	123	64	329	1170
1984		166	492	114	52	272	1096
1985	1	179	454	119	55	327	1135
1986	2	204	483	100	81	256	1126
1987	5	190	538	111	81	305	1230
TOTALS	8	2993	7205	1325	547	2101	14179

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